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(Left) Kyle K. Kopitke (standing on a chair), congressional candidate and organizer of the citizens' protest against the test-burning of cyanide, addresses the media and the crowd at a "can-



die'light vigil" outside the C-E Raymond laboratory Tuesday night. (Right) Residents and their children carry placards stating that the test is a life-and-death issue.

(Photos by Jo Lundeen)

Council split on reopening cyanide debate

by Jim Pokin

Mayor Margaret Price on Tuesday asked the City Council to reopen consideration of the test-burning of cyanide at the C-E Raymond laboratory, so that citizens opposed to the test can again address the Council.

However, the Council may not reopen the controversial subject, unless one of the councilmen who voted in favor of the test makes a motion to reconsider.

Mayor Price suggested that the matter be placed on the Council's Jan. 9 agenda.

She suggested that the matter could be formally brought up on Jan. 9, but would not be taken up until a subsequent special adjourned session, which could be entirely devoted to the cyanide question.

The Council voted 3-2 on Dec. 19 to support the cyanide test, after officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and C-E Raymond, assured the Council that the test-burn would be safe.

Residents of the nearby Country

Lakes and Longwood Manor areas strongly opposed the test, as did other residents. Since the Council's vote, protest demonstrations covered by the Chicago news media have been held at the C-E Raymond lab site, at 2151 Fisher dr., between Diehl road and the East-West Tollway, west of Rt. 59.

Council members on Tuesday indicated that they have also been the targets of a vigorous telephone lobbying campaign by concerned citizens.

Mrs. Price, in asking that the matter be taken up again, noted that the Council has never denied anyone the right to speak on any subject.

Councilman Donald Wehrli, who voted in favor of the test (along with Mayor Price and Councilman James Newkirk), vehemently opposed any move to reopen the matter.

'Can of maggots'

"We did not deny anyone a chance to talk (on Dec. 19 and at a previous workshop session) . . . We left it open to any human being that wanted to walk into this city

hall!" he stated.

Wehrli said he did not want to "open a can of maggots" by taking the issue up again.

Councilman Newkirk said that if the matter were brought up again at the regular Jan. 9 meeting, it might be considered at an adjourned session on Jan. 11 or 12.

Wehrli sarcastically suggested that a hearing be held on Saturday, Jan. 14, and continue throughout the weekend, for 48 hours, "and it still won't do a bit of good."

Councilman Joseph Phelan, who voted against the test (along with Councilman Phyllis Rasmussen), said he has no objection to another long session on the subject. However, he expressed doubt that another session would serve any purpose, unless one of the Council members in favor of the test were willing on Jan. 9 to make a motion to reconsider the Dec. 19 vote.

The Council, if it were to change its mind, must do so before Jan. 23. Mrs. Price said testing is tentatively scheduled to begin that week.

Wehrli's nose

"I'll be right there with my nose

in the (smoke) stack!" Wehrli said.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the C-E Raymond Co. would comply with the Council's wishes, if the Council were to change its mind.

(Although the company had received USEPA and IEPA emergency permits prior to the Council's Dec. 19 vote, the firm volunteered to abide by the Council's vote on the matter.)

Mayor Price said it is her understanding that the Illinois Attorney General's Office, which wants the test done, might get an injunction which would require the company to perform the test.

"Then I think this Council is trying to get this Council off the hook because of adverse public opinion," Mrs. Rasmussen said.

Mayor Price said she believes the C-E Raymond Co. is reconsidering its position concerning the test. (However, company president Ronald Rohlicek told The SUN on Tuesday, after a meeting with state and federal officials, that the status of the test was unchanged.)

Councilman Newkirk said that if another session is held with the

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Cyanide review rests on vote to reconsider

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public, he would like the USEPA, the IEPA, the Attorney General's Office, and the C-E Raymond Co. to again be represented, to answer citizens' questions about the test.

TV news criticized

Newkirk said a television news broadcast Monday night by Channel 5 inaccurately indicated that the purpose of the incineration is to dispose of all of the cyanide tainted film chips (14,500,000 pounds) contained in abandoned trailers in and around Chicago.

According to the USEPA, the planned test-burn at the C-E Raymond Co.'s small, model incinerator, would utilize at most 2,000 pounds of film chips, containing trace amounts of cyanide, burned during four-hour sessions on six different days. If the test confirms that the cyanide can be destroyed by high-temperature burning, the remainder of the film chips might be burned at a commercial, industrial-sized incinerator located elsewhere.

Councilman Phelan said a broadcast on Channel 2 over the weekend contained the same inaccurate information as Channel 5.

Councilman Wehrli said that if the broadcast media have misinformed the public, that is the stations' problem. He said anyone interested in information can listen to the tape of that meeting.

Phelan reiterated that the matter should only be brought up again if one of the majority in favor of the test moves to reconsider on Jan. 9.

'Educating' the public

Mrs. Price asked whether Phelan would be unwilling to listen to the public on the subject, in the event no motion is made. She suggested that the Council could do a better job of educating the public about the test, if another session were held.

Mrs. Rasmussen asked if Mrs. Price believes that it is the Council's job to "educate" the public, or to listen to what the citizens have to say.

Wehrli insisted that the matter is closed.

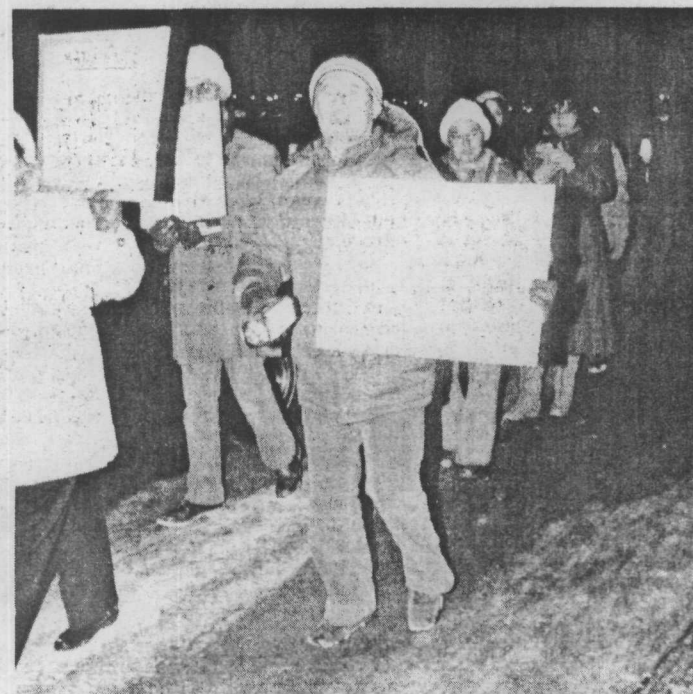
"You're going to take a dead worm and try to bring him back to life. Forget it!" he said.

Phelan said that at this point, he believes that it is up to the USEPA and the IEPA, as well as C-E Raymond, to educate the public about the test, barring a motion to reconsider by the Council.

'Non-representative' vote

Mrs. Rasmussen said the public wants to speak on the matter again, because citizens believe the Council's Dec. 19 vote "was not representative of Naperville's people."

"Oh, Phyllis, get off your high



A line of protestors marches near the C-E Raymond laboratory.

horse!" Mrs. Price said.

After the meeting, Mrs. Rasmussen angrily objected to Mrs. Price that she should not make "personal" comments about councilmen, while acting as chairman of the

Council's meetings.

A "candlelight vigil" at the C-E Raymond lab was held Tuesday night. Another protest is scheduled for Saturday at 10 a.m., on the Riverwalk, across from city hall.

State, C-E Raymond to proceed with test

The president of the C-E Raymond Co. said yesterday that the proposed test-incineration of cyanide-tainted film chips is likely to occur at his company's Naperville laboratory during the week of Jan. 16 or Jan. 23.

Residents have held two protest demonstrations at the laboratory, located at 2151 Fisher dr. Asked if there has been a change in the status of the proposed test, company president Ronald Rohlicek said, "I would say there is not. In conversations with the (Illinois) Attorney General's Office, they still feel that this should proceed. We still feel we should proceed. We're going in that direction."

Rohlicek said the week of Jan. 23 is the most probable date for the testing.

He said company officials are considering whether or not to take an advertisement to discuss the

facts associated with the safety of the test, but the corporation does not want an "us-against-them" situation with protesting residents.

Rohlicek said that although many may disagree, the company still believes it is performing "almost a public service" in conducting the test at the request of the Attorney General's office.

"We're not making any money on it. In fact, we're losing a considerable amount of money," Rohlicek said.

The Attorney General's Office, in conjunction with federal and state environmental protection officials, wants a test-incineration conducted on a sample of cyanide-tainted film chips, in C-E Raymond's test-model incinerator.

If the test confirms that high temperatures will destroy the cyanide, officials may decide to use a commercial-sized incinerator, such as

the SCA Corp. equipment on the South Side of Chicago, to destroy up to 14,500,000 pounds of film chips abandoned in trailers in and around Chicago, and at a warehouse at Dixon, Ill.

The company had said it would not conduct the test without approval from the Naperville City Council, although such approval was not required by law. That approval came in a 3-2 vote Dec. 19. The City Council on Tuesday debated whether to reopen the issue.

Asked if a reversal by the Council would have an impact on the test, Rohlicek said, "I believe that we would prefer to cross that bridge when we come to it."

The SUN asked whether the Attorney General's Office could require the test, regardless of any further action by the Council. Rohlicek said the Attorney General's Office could best answer that ques-

tion.

He noted that his company has entered into a contract to conduct the test.

Comment from the Attorney General's Office could not be obtained, by press time.

The SUN asked Rohlicek whether the adverse publicity generated by the protest might affect C-E Raymond's plans for the future, to seek a long-term permit for hazardous waste testing.

Rohlicek said he does not want to confuse the current issue (a one-time test, under an emergency permit issued by environmental protection officials).

He said, "It will certainly make us sit down and take note. I would not consider it to be an issue at this point. It is a separate issue that should not be linked together (with the incineration of the film chips)."

citizens question

TV news criticized

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